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B. MAJOR PROBLEMS AND AREAS OF DIFFICULTY

3. Soviet Activities in Antarctica

Activities -- Soviet accomplishment during the past 6 months more than fulfills the original plans for the establishment of base facilities for the IGY program. The main base Mirnyy was established and 92 scientists and technicians have remained to continue preparations for the other two stations. Explorations and surveys for base sites were undertaken (1) in the vicinity of the South Geomagnetic Pole for the proposed station, Vostok; and (2) the halfway point on the route to Sovetskaya at the "Pole of Relative Inaccessibility." Pionerskaya, "a permanent Soviet research station," was set up on 27 May as an intermediate base nearly 400 kms along the route to Vostok.

The Soviets have also engaged in a wide range of activities beyond the requirements of the IGY program. Some of these activities -- in meteorology, glaciology, and geophysics -- are within the content of the IGY but are nearly 1-1/2 years ahead of schedule. Others -- in geology, biogeography, physical geography, and aerial surveying and mapping -- are entirely outside the scope of the IGY program. Exploration and survey flights have been made east and west of Mirnyy, one nearly 400 km. to the east. Regional field studies employing Arctic-developed air-hop methods have been made for (1) a 500 sq. km. area in the Bunger Hills, (2) Drygalski Island, (3) a point in the interior over 800 kms.

south of Mirnyy, and (4) part of the nearly 400-km. tractor train route to Pionerskaya.

At sea, the Marine Group of the Expedition, using the Ob and its 7 laboratories, undertook a vast program of continuous sea observations and hydrographic charting. Covering 32,000 kms. over a three-month period, the Ob concentrated on the coastal waters of the continent. Then, after a stay of several days in Australia and in New Zealand, the Ob worked back through the South Indian Ocean, stopped at Kerguelen (presumably to examine air facilities for possible intercontinental flights), and continued via the Atlantic to the USSR. The more modestly equipped Lena, which proceeded along another route and had a narrower program of scientific observations, stopped at Australia for weeks and then continued to the USSR via the Suez Canal.

In at least two known instances, statements of Soviet activity were placed in metal cylinders and deposited in cairns under Soviet flags -- one by the airborne research team in the Bunger Hills area and the other by a landing party on an island of an archipelago off the Budd Coast. Two Soviet names were given to islands off the Knox Coast. Soviet publicity has stressed (1) field work in areas heretofore either unknown or insufficiently studied, (2) explorations in areas hitherto untrodden by man, and (3) surveying, ~~mapping~~, and charting of areas previously either unmapped or incorrectly mapped. Although explicit claims interests have been studiously avoided in most Soviet announcements, Dr. I. D. Shcherbakov, Chairman of the Council for Antarctic Research of the Praesidium of the Academy of Sciences, USSR, combined an expression of

Soviet political, economic, and strategic interests in Antarctica with a discussion of scientific plans, in a publication of the All-Union Society for Political and Scientific Knowledge with a circulation of 85,000. In it, he reiterates the Soviet claim that the Russians discovered the continent in January-February 1820, ridicules the "foreigners'" dependence on the 1907 recollections of one of Palmer's descendants of information contained in his diary that was burned in 1850, and concludes that distortions of historical fact are intended to justify U.S. seizure of Antarctic territory. He rejects the sector principle and its basis on coastal activities and restates the Soviet policy expressed in the memorandum of 7 June 1950. He repeats previous Soviet assertions that imperialist interest in Antarctica by other nations is based on (1) the desire to exploit the mineral resources through newly improved technology, (2) the pivotal position of Antarctica on the transpolar routes between the continents, which makes it useful as an intermediate base for air communications. He categorically concludes that "Antarctica, its shores and particularly the islands of Antarctica are important in a strategic respect."

After reviewing previously announced plans of activity for the Antarctic Expedition, Shcherbakov indicates a possible areal retrenchment of Soviet activity to the coast of the Antarctic between 80°E and 105°E and a "large territory extending deeply in the direction of the South Pole." He also elaborates on non-IGY plans that may not be unrelated to his earlier statement on the strategic importance of Antarctica. Various studies will be made to improve air and sea navigation and the basing of

aviation. In addition to hydrographic surveys, plans are included for correcting existing navigational aids and for improving operation of navigation piloting devices in high latitudes. The added attention to be given to the study of the "raw material base" for the whaling industry is apparently required to justify the recently announced addition of new vessels to the "Slava" flotilla for the 1956-57 season and of a new fleet, now under construction. Geological exploration will be undertaken not only by surface reconnaissance but also by "aero-geological" methods.

Activities in promotion of Soviet public relations on Antarctic activities have included (1) exchanges of visits with the Australians on two occasions, (2) visits by the Ob to Australia and New Zealand, and the two-week visit by the Lena to Australia, (3) exchanges of weather data with Australia, France, and U.S. Soviet foreign broadcasts have almost studiously avoided political discussions and have slanted all reporting to (1) Soviet exploration and mapping in areas either unexplored or insufficiently mapped and studied, (2) the success of Soviet technology in base establishment and operations, and (3) the adversity of conditions under which these successes were achieved.

Implications -- The raising of the Soviet flag in at least four places, the naming of geographic features, the depositing of evidences of Soviet activity in stone cairns, and the emphasis on activities in heretofore unexplored areas clearly underscore Soviet intentions to strengthen their claim to participate in any Antarctic sovereignty settlement. Other objectives of Soviet activities are (1) learning more of the physical

nature of the continent, its seas, and the characteristics and dynamics of their environments for an evaluation of the economic, political, and strategic potentialities and problems of the region; (2) obtaining valuable meteorological, geophysical, and oceanographic data for Soviet studies of the Earth as a whole, and particularly of the dynamic relationships between the two Polar regions; and (3) propagandizing the superiority of Soviet capabilities, contributions to world knowledge, and the friendliness and cooperativeness. Noteworthy are the additional Soviet indications of interest in mineral-resource exploration, expansion of whaling activities, and studies to improve air and sea navigation, including the problem of the basing of aircraft in Antarctica. Territorial claims are likely to be withheld pending the results of the IGY and other investigations unless other nations take measures to expand their claims or establish new ones.

By these and future activities the USSR will acquire (1) a significant record of exploration and field studies in depth and areal extent within the continent, and (2) unique map and chart coverage. Ultimately these are likely to outweigh U.S. rights acquired by first sighting land or by limited coastal activities. Since some of their activities extend into unexplored areas, the Soviet Union has begun to acquire some basis for participating in any settlement of the sovereignty question. This will make extremely difficult, if not impossible, the exclusion of the USSR from Antarctica or from any arrangements for control over it. In areas of Soviet operations, moreover, these activities are a threat to reassertion of U.S. rights based solely on discovery and air exploration.

Maps now being compiled by the U.S. for the coasts in the areas of Soviet operation will strengthen U.S. rights provided they are published before Soviet maps. On the other hand, the NSC policy for the blanket exclusion of all field mapping activities from current and future U.S. programs would prevent the protection of U.S. rights in the interior of the continent and thus frustrate one of the basic objectives of the NSC policy.